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A PASTORAL ADDRESS

To the Presbyterian Secession Congregation of Saintfield.

[WE gladly give insertion to the subjoined article from the pen of Mr. Moffat. Its author, having been seized with illness while labouring zealously and faithfully on the Mission of the Presbyterian Secession Church in Dublin, has been, under Providence, set aside for a time—we trust, a very short time—from the active duties of his office; but he is not unemployed, as the present address will testify. It was intended merely to circulate it in the form of a small pamphlet among the people of the Saintfield Congregation: we were of opinion, however, that it is calculated to be more extensively useful in the churches; and, accordingly, we have taken the liberty of transferring it to the pages of the *Christian Freeman*.—EDIT.]

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

THE ministry of the Gospel is so sublime in its nature, so awful in its responsibilities, and so vast in its results, that its duties are not suitably performed while a single energy is kept back from the service. Under this impression, since I was placed over you in the Lord, I have endvoured with some measure of faithfulness, as I trust you yourselves can testify, to labour among you in word and doctrine, to teach you publicly and from house to house, and to use all the other means I could think of for the promotion of your spiritual and eternal welfare. In the providence of God, however, I am laid aside for a little from active duty, and, therefore, my only resource is the one which, especially at the commencement of a new year, I now most cheerfully adopt. My tongue is silent, but my pen shall speak.

To impress you with the rapid flight of time, to persuade you to call yourselves to an account before the Judge of all shall do it, to warn sinners to fly from the wrath to come, to

quicken believers in the cultivation of personal piety, and to stir up all to every good work, are the principal objects of this short address.

Another year has passed away. With all its sins, its privileges, and its unnumbered mercies, it has gone, never to return. Oh, how quickly it has fled! Its commencement seems like yesterday, but it has already closed, and closed for ever. Brethren, do, I beseech you, pause and consider. Take an honest view of the past year, and see how short it looks. Then glance forward over the year upon which we have entered, and why should you think it any longer? The two periods are both alike, and while the one seems so insignificant behind you, why should you regard the other as stretching out so far before you? Oh, if we had but common sense enough to form our estimate of the future from our experience of the past, how fleeting and empty would life appear! Then should we find that "our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle," and that "we spend our years as a tale that is told." And then should we feel that "as for man his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." Oh, that we were wise, that we understood this, that we would consider our latter end!

Permit me, my dear friends, to suggest the inquiry, what progress you have made in preparation for that eternal state upon which you are so soon to enter? Many of you are young, and though you would not *say* it, you may *feel* and *act* as if you said it—that you have time enough before you yet. But young as you are, you are not too young to die, and therefore upon YOU, even upon YOU, I would press the great inquiry. Others of you are in middle life, and the cares connected with your farms or your merchandise, or with the making of suitable provision for your families, may supply you with many pretended apologies for at least a little delay in regard to the one thing needful. But let such mark what I say;—if I could blazen it in characters of fire I would do it; if I could proclaim it in a voice of thunder I would do it;—*unless you have made up your minds to barter your souls for your worldly gains, and to rush to hell for the sake of supporting your families and yourselves, do not dare to postpone the momentous investigation of your state in the sight of God.* Some are in the decline of life; and surely you, my aged friends, cannot hesitate to admit, that if it be foolishness in the young, and infatuation in the middle aged, it is downright phrensy in YOU

to shift the all-important question which I would urge so earnestly upon you. What! with a life of sin behind you and a dread eternity before you, with the yawning grave beneath you, and Heaven's awful judgment-seat above you, will you sit still in cold indifference and let matters take their course? Or rather, are you not shocked by the base insinuation of such consummate madness? By the short and fleeting nature of our lives—by the value of the soul, the awful importance of eternity, the dread alternative of heaven or hell, under which every one of us is placed—by a crowd of most powerful and pressing motives, I would, therefore, summon ALL to consider how matters stand between their souls and God.

Come, my dear brethren, come and stand for a little before the bar of conscience. It may help to prepare you for another bar to which the voice of the archangel and the trump of God will shortly summon you. Feeling yourselves in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, taking his Word for your guide, and earnestly beseeching the illumination of his Spirit, let all that is within you be stirred up to the great and solemn scrutiny.—Our Lord has declared, that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and have *you* any satisfactory evidence of this mighty change in heart and character? "If any man be in Christ," we are told, "he is a new creature;" and are you new creatures?—new in your affections, dispositions, desires, and deportment, so that you can truly say, "Old things have passed away, and all things have become new?" "He that believeth not the Son," the same high authority has assured us, "shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" and do *you* believe the Son, your conscience bearing you witness that you come to him as condemned criminals, and accept the gracious proposals, and rest the whole weight of your eternal interests upon the credit of his all-faithful announcements? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," we are solemnly informed that "he is none of his;" and have *you* the Spirit of Christ? Do you bear his likeness? and are you filled with all his fulness? "Without holiness," it is the high appointment of heaven that "no man shall see the Lord;" and is holiness in any degree *your* attainment? Are you so fascinated with the moral beauty of it as to delight in it wherever you find it, and to loathe whatever is opposed to it? And is it your most eager ambition to be holy as God is holy, and perfect as he is perfect? Brethren, be not afraid to meet these momentous inquiries. Read them again and

again, and let your consciences honestly speak out in reply to them. Let there be no evasion, no putting off, no shifting in the matter. Come to the point at once, and keep to the point, until you arrive at some definite conclusion, whatever it may be. And, above all, that you may be guided by wisdom better than your own in an investigation of such transcendent importance. Make this your constant prayer—"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

And now, my dear brethren, what do you say to these things? Many of you, I fear, if you deal candidly and faithfully with yourselves, must come to an unfavourable conclusion. Be it so, then; it is infinitely better for you to know the worst while the remedy is at hand, than to go down to hell in self-deception and delusion. Just think of the situation of the man who, in the fond hope that all is well, allows his time and his opportunities to glide gently past, until the fearful reality of his unregenerate state bursts upon him when it is too late, and when all is over. Oh, how thankful you ought to be that such a tremendous situation is not yours! and that although you are convinced of being yet in your sins, it is not the loud proclamation of your irrevocable doom that has forced that conviction upon you! Yet still your condition is inexpressibly dreadful; would to God that your eyes were opened to behold the thousandth part of its dreadfulness! Your hearts are "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and your lives are little else but one continued scene of rebellion against Omnipotence. Heaven's dark and withering frown is accordingly upon you, the sword of justice is unsheathed against you, the wrath to come is full before you. Read such passages as the following, and tremble while you read them. They are as true as if you saw them written in flaming fire upon the firmament above you—as certain as if through the opened heaven you heard them uttered in rolling thunders from the throne of God. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord

Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Sinners! behold your doom. Do you shudder to think of it? Then how will you bear the reality? "Consider this ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

O brethren, will nothing awake you? Will neither the occasional remonstrances of conscience, nor the dark forebodings of coming wrath, nor the terrific threatenings of violated justice, nor the loud denouncements of Jehovah's vengeance, nor all the other motives which I have so often mustered in dense array before you? Will none of these rouse you from your false and fatal security? If not, perhaps you may have no objections to hear that you will not long be teased with such gloomy warnings. O no, you will soon be "let alone" —let alone quite as much as you could wish. "Sleep on now," will be the only message you will be troubled with, and the long neglected voice of faithful remonstrance and reproof will be heard no more for ever. Great God! prevent this tremendous consummation! Rouse slumbering sinners, for Thou alone canst rouse them! O awaken them from their sleep of death, before they awake in hell! "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." Let there be another Pentecostal effusion of thy influence—another year of the right hand of the Most High.

Brethren, hear while you may hear the tidings of salvation. They fill all heaven with rapture, and all hell with dismay. Let not those to whom they are addressed, and addressed by the Supreme Jehovah, receive them with indifference. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." These are the glorious news of the Gospel—the generous proposals of its propitiated

Author. And "to you," my dear friends, "TO YOU is the word of this salvation sent." It is true, you have made yourselves utterly unworthy of the exalted privilege. Your sins cry aloud for vengeance, and the arm of the Lord is made bare to smite you into ruin; but he seems reluctant to inflict the threatened stroke of a just and holy retribution. The atmosphere is darkening—the storm is gathering—a sullen cloud of impending wrath is enlarging, and thickening, and blackening above you; but it would appear slow and unwilling to burst in fury upon your heads. "How shall I give thee up Ephraim?" is the language of your long-suffering though offended Sovereign. "How shall I deliver thee Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." Still he is seated upon a throne of mercy, and is waiting to be gracious—gracious *to you*; and still he commands, invites, and implores you to cast yourselves as humble penitents at his feet, and to accept of those offers which he is so freely making. Come then, my dear brethren, and close with his proposals. Come and take him at his word, renouncing all worthiness of your own, and making mention of his righteousness, even of his only. Come as self-destroyed offenders, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," and give yourselves wholly to the Saviour, receiving him in all his offices, resting on his purchased redemption, pleading for the powerful operations of his Spirit, and devoting yourselves heartily to his service. "Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope." "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Lord we are thine, let your language be. Too long have we lived as though we had been our own, or the world's, or Satan's. But, "O Lord our God, though other lords besides thee have had dominion over us, by thee only will we make mention of thy name." Renouncing all that thou abhorrest, we give ourselves to thee, to be by thy grace what thou requirest, to do what thou commandest, and to suffer what thou inflictest. Accept of the dedication we now unreservedly make to thee in Jesus' name; ratify it in heaven, and seal it by *thy* Spirit in our souls. Justify us by thy grace, renew us by thy power, comfort us by thy love, guide us by thy counsel, and preserve us to thy heavenly kingdom.

Attend, my dear friends, to this affectionate appeal, and the result will be most delightful. The peace of God that passeth understanding will fill your souls, and "hopes full of immor-

tality" will rise within you. The Church of Christ, the flock of his pasture, will rejoice over another lost sheep reclaimed from its wanderings, and brought back into the fold to stray no more. The angels of God will tune their harps to higher strains of ecstatic praise, as they become ministering spirits to another heir of glory. Jesus, seeing of the travail of his soul, will be satisfied—satisfied in another trophy of his cross, another monument of his love, another burning gem implanted in his crown. And God himself will rejoice as he welcomes back, for Jesus' sake, another poor prodigal to all the fulness of a Father's house, and all the tenderness of a Father's love. But alas! what a melancholy contrast is here suggested! Reject the appeal which has been pressed upon you, or what is the same thing, let it pass with, perhaps, a little momentary concern, and you incur the guilt of refusing submission to the Saviour, and setting at nought the riches of his grace. You may accordingly be left in judicial blindness, your hearts may be given up to hardness and impenitence, and God may "swear, in his wrath, that you shall not enter into his rest." He who now sits on a throne of grace will take his seat on a throne of judgment; the "Lamb of God" will become the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," the proclamation "Come," will be changed into "Depart," and the threatening will be fulfilled to the very utmost of its terms:—"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind."

These solemn considerations, though by no means inappropriate to any, are addressed more particulary to the unconverted. I trust, however, that after the patient and prayerful investigation of your state before God, already recommended, some will be led on good grounds to a more favourable conclusion. There were a few names, even in Sardis, which had not defiled their garments, and I trust that among us, with all our imperfections, there are some of whom God is pleased to say, "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." Nay, I am sure of it, for "Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." To you, therefore, my dear Christian brethren, permit me to address myself. How amazing are your privileges! "If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."

God has elected you from eternity, and sent his own Son to redeem you. Jesus Christ has come into the world in your nature, and made a perfect atonement for your sins. The Holy Spirit has been poured out from on high, to renew and to sanctify you. The three-one Jehovah "is not ashamed to be called your God." His promises are your inheritance, his truth is your security, he himself is your portion, and his own habitation is your eternal home. The unsearchable riches of Christ are yours, the whole fulness of the everlasting covenant is yours, the sublime glories of heaven are yours—ALL THINGS are yours, "and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." How can you help exclaiming in astonishment and in praise, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies!"

While, however, you are permitted and even encouraged to rejoice in the Lord, you ought to rejoice with trembling. A wicked heart is still within you, enemies innumerable are around you, a rugged path of self-denial and of warfare is before you. Beware, therefore, of falling into the error of the Israelites, who, when they were conducted through the Red Sea, raised the song of victory as if the triumph had been complete, never dreaming of the vast wilderness, the dreary wanderings, the heavy trials, the powerful foes, that lay between them and their destined rest. Obstacles of a similar kind interpose between you and the promised land to which you aspire, and these obstacles must be struggled with and surmounted before you can gain the object of your high and holy ambition. Brethren, it will not do for you to take your ease in peaceful security. Rest assured that as in temporal, so in spiritual concerns, nothing can be gained, but much may be lost by drowsy indolence. You are rowing against a powerful current—a current of lusts and passions, which has swept multitudes before it, and plunged them in destruction and perdition; and while you rest upon your oars, how can you make head against the impetuous stream? You are wrestling "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," and unless you take unto you the whole armour of God, and "gird yourselves like men," how can you expect to gain the victory? Like the ancient competitors in the Grecian games, you are running a race, and if you will

not lay aside every weight, and strain every nerve, and summon up every energy, how can you hope to reach the mark for the prize, and to win the crown of glory? It is "through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God."

Let me exhort you, therefore, my Christian brethren, to *aim at an elevated standard of personal piety.* Be not satisfied with low attainments, but forgetting the things that are behind, reach forth to those that are before. Oh, what leanness of soul, what weakness of graces, what doubtings and despondings, what barrenness and unfaithfulness may be traced to a neglect of this advice! We must aspire after great things, and press on in earnest as if we really wanted them; and we must actually expect them, if we would receive them. In connexion with this important direction, let me insist on your *cultivating habitually the secret exercises of practical and experimental religion.* Never hurry over the duties of the closet. Let them be uniformly engaged in with solemnity, spirituality, and devotion. Fail not to read the Scriptures daily, and to read them with the humility and simplicity of babes. Mary "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word;"—strive to be like her. Nothing is of greater importance to your growth in grace. Beware of neglecting meditation and self-examination. The Book of God, the dealings of his providence, and your own hearts and lives, will furnish you with ample materials for these important duties. Let no excuse prevent their performance even for a single day. So long as you are guilty of omission in this particular, you need not expect to be flourishing and consistent Christians. Cherish also a habitual sense of the Divine presence. Let the solemn reflection never be far from your minds—"Thou God seest me;" and let this reflection be accompanied with reverence, confidence, and love. Strive to realize eternity. Though surrounded with the "things that are seen," look away above and beyond them, to "things not seen yet;" and be influenced by the latter in your whole deportment rather than by the former. And that you may be stimulated to the more faithful performance of these and all the other duties of personal religion, remember that "to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." I would further admonish you *to show the blessed results of vital Christianity in your daily walk and conversation.* It is somewhere quaintly, perhaps, but beautifully remarked, that Jesus has taken our nature to represent us in heaven, and given us his nature to represent him on earth. Yes, Christians, you are the representatives of your Lord, and the world will

judge of him from what it sees in you! Act, therefore, on all occasions as you would wish it to be believed that he would have acted in similar circumstances. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked." By such a course of holy obedience, the world will be led to take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus; you will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; you will be living epistles commending the Gospel wherever you go; and others seeing your good works will glorify your Father who is in heaven. You will experience more than ever the blessedness of religion in your souls; "her ways," you will feel, "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" and dwelling under the shadow of the Lord, you "shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine," and "cast forth your roots as Lebanon."

In the considerations thus urged on sinners and on saints, I have been addressing you chiefly as *individuals*, and I shall now for a little speak to you as *families*. Hear, then, your duties from the Word of God:—"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh: not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God." There, my dear brethren, are your duties "in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and you will allow me to deduce from them a few directions on points in regard to which there is much room for improvement among you. *Let family religion be diligently cultivated in your household.* It is distressing to think of the shallow apologies, the flimsy excuses, the shiftings and evasions, and unnumbered pretences of those who seem determined to stand out against this advice. Parents, mark what I solemnly tell you—I write it deliberately and advisedly—God forbid that you should experience its truth when too late: Unless you regularly observe the worship of God in your families, you need not expect to train up your children for the Lord—you need not expect to be held guiltless of their blood in the great day of accounts; and you need not expect to escape the "fury" which He who cannot lie has threatened to "pour out upon the heathen, and

upon the *families* that call not on his name." If you neglect this honest warning, I shall only say, *be prepared for the consequences.* In addition to the duty of family worship, I would earnestly press the necessity of *keeping up in each household a regular system of religious instruction.* The catechizing of children or servants on Sabbath evenings, though an excellent exercise when properly conducted, is by no means sufficient. Just look at the case as it stands. The young spend five or six hours every day in learning chiefly the ordinary branches of a secular education; while, perhaps, an hour in the week is the whole time usually occupied in the receiving of parental instruction, on subjects connected with the soul and eternity. Brethren, I put it to yourselves, is this as it ought to be? Is there not a glaring disparity here, the very statement of which is enough to condemn it? Most assuredly, an entirely new order of things is loudly called for in this particular. I cannot here fully explain my views, but you know them already, and what has been said may serve to recall them to your minds. I would further urge the imperative duty of *securing a proper government and a due subordination in your households.* Let there be government, for all will be confusion without it; and let it not be one of tyranny, or passion, or caprice, or over-indulgence; but one of mildness and affection, combined with firm decision. And let there be subordination—not the forced, crouching submission which springs from fear, but the delightful obedience which proceeds from love.

Seek, in short, to have the families with which you are connected organized upon the great model of Jehovah's family. Thus will your houses be bethels for the God of Jacob; every Christian virtue will adorn your domestic circles; love and harmony and calm contentment will smile around your fire-sides, and your families will be nurseries to the church, rearing plants for the "house of the Lord" to flourish in the courts of our God, and to be at length transplanted into the paradise above, where they shall strike their roots and raise their tops, expand their branches, diffuse their odours, and bear their fruit for ever.

With a few directions to you in your *congregational* capacity, I shall close the address. One of the objects for which in the providence of God you have been organized into a church, is improvement in reference to the things that belong to your peace. Let this object be kept steadily before you, and your duties to one another can hardly fail to be suggested to your minds. Upon you, my dear brethren, the members

of the Session, I would affectionately press this exhortation. Remember the awfully solemn relation in which you stand to the congregation, and keep its interests always at heart. Be ever on the look out for opportunities of doing good. Let it be your daily study how you may be useful in the important office to which you have been called. And if you be truly in earnest, as office-bearers in the church, believe me you will find enough to do. Your office is no sinecure. The ignorant are to be instructed, the negligent stirred up, the vicious reproved, the sick visited, a constant superintendence over the whole flock is to be exercised, the hands of the minister are to be strengthened in every good work, a mild but faithful discipline is to be maintained, and nothing is to be left undone that has a tendency to promote the glory of God, the interests of religion, and the welfare of immortal souls. These are your duties, and by all the sacredness of your public engagements, by all the weight of your awful responsibility, and by all the solemnity of the account you must shortly render, I would most earnestly insist upon their zealous and persevering performance.

Bless God, my dear friends—I address the congregation at large—bless God for your high privileges, and endeavour to improve them. Be regular and punctual in your attendance upon the ordinances of the Gospel. Never let your seats be vacant on the Lord's day, except for reasons which you would not be afraid to plead before the bar of God. And make it a matter of conscience to be uniformly in your places at the appointed hour. The minister ought to be the last person that enters the house of prayer, and his whole congregation assembled to receive him, should say by their devout appearance, as he commences the solemn service, "Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." "Take heed, also, how you hear." Receive the word as God's message, attend to it as if it came directly from himself, talk over it in your families, meditate upon it in your closets, and, above all, practise it in your lives. I would farther entreat you to avail yourselves of all the other means of improvement which you enjoy. You have regular visitation from house to house, you have periodical diets of catechising, you have a lending library accessible to the poorest, you have a Bible class, a young men's society, and a monthly meeting of communicants and candidates for communion; you have little societies for Christian fellowship and prayer, the number and efficiency of which it will be your own fault if you do not increase; and you have several other occasional advan-

tages which I need not enumerate. Oh, brethren, be careful to make a good use of these privileges, remembering that if you neglect them, they will assuredly rise in judgment against you. There is another point, an allusion to which I trust you will excuse. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." Be not displeased at their humble attempts to be faithful in the responsible situation of office-bearers in the church. They are the objects of your own choice, invited by yourselves to speak plainly to you and to deal honestly with you; be not dissatisfied at their endeavours to do the work to which you yourselves have called them. And, independently of this consideration, they have surely a right to expect the warmest co-operation from you in such an important undertaking, as that of raising the standard of Christian profession, and promoting a more holy and consistent deportment. "We therefore beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love *for their works' sake.*"

Besides the advancement of your own spiritual welfare, another object for which you have been organized into a worshipping society, is the extension of real religion around you. Keep this object, also, always in view. The church of Christ is essentially of a missionary character—let this character be broadly and deeply inscribed upon you. O how happy it would be, if all the members of our communion, instead of being counteracting energies or dead weights in the machinery of the church, were co-operating forces for the effecting of a great work of reformation in the world. On this subject I feel an anxiety which I cannot express; and I do beseech you, my dear brethren, with my whole soul, to awaken to the most zealous exertion in the great work of doing good. You have very important spheres of usefulness in your respective families, and to them your first energies ought to be directed. Sabbath schools afford, especially to the young, an excellent opportunity of promoting the cause of the Gospel—an opportunity which, perhaps for the hundredth time, I would earnestly recommend. Our Congregational Missionary Society, though in rather a prosperous state, has not yet received any thing like the support to which it is entitled, and I would, therefore, commend it to your liberality, your exertions, and your prayers. And there is another most blessed work which offers you an excellent means of at once receiving and communicating benefit—a work whose

principles are founded on the solid basis of eternal truth, and whose operations are in happy unison with the Gospel of Christ—a work which is carried forward by the greatest and best of men, and signally owned by the providence of God—and a work which, by every feeling of love to yourselves, your families, your church, and your country, you are called upon to engage in:—I allude, as you may suppose, to the Temperance Reformation. To such benevolent exertions, I would beseech you to add the silent testimony of holy lives. Thus will you be a Christian church indeed, and God while he blesses you will make you a blessing. The light that shines upon you, you will reflect upon others, and thus you will sustain the noble character of a witness for Jesus, until, from the situation of the church militant on earth, you rise to that of the church triumphant in heaven. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom, *shine ye as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life;* that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain nor laboured in vain."

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think on these things.*"

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

I remain, my dear brethren,

Your affectionate Pastor,

WALTER MOFFAT.

January 1st. 1836.

AMERICAN SLAVERY AND ANTI-SLAVERY.

BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

THE population of the American United States is divided into two castes, a Patrician and a Plebean order, distinguished by colour. The fundamental and eternal difference, said a lady, consists in a single drop of African blood flowing in the veins. A third class is gradually increasing in number and importance—the friends of abolition. This class is at present, as it has for some time past, been going through a terrific ordeal; public rage for some time has been increasing to greater and still greater madness against it; but it must soon triumph. The last peal of the thunder-storm is always the loudest, the darkest hour in all the night is the hour before day; and no doubt, the thunder of popular rage which now rolls over the friends of the slave in America, and the thick darkness which covers them, and the convulsive throes which waste their property and threaten their lives, portend an early, bright, and glorious day.

Let the following serve as specimens of slavery as it is in the United States:—A slave in Georgia, sought refuge in the swampy forests, from the despotism which he could not brook, and kept himself concealed in places which a refuge slave alone could voluntarily inhabit, till the ragings of hunger overcame him; and he crept back to the plantation; the overseer received him with wrath, and, regardless of his anguish and his entreaties, securing him with cords, flogged him without pity; the underling grew weary at length, the tortured slave was wreathing in his blood; just then came in the master, and seized the lash, and continued the outrage. Pray, Massa, oh! pray, pray, Massa, feebly screamed the perishing slave; but what was prayer to the slave-master, uncurbed despotism was afloat; who can utter its horrors!—the sufferer's cry became more and more feeble; even the convulsion of his quivering flesh subsided—he felt no more; but the tyrant was inflamed with rage at the passiveness of his victim, and swore and drew the lash with more revengeful nerve, but in vain, the spirit had returned to Him who gave it—the voice was silent, and the flesh was dead.

The cause was tried in the capital of Georgia; I had the account from a public officer who was engaged on the trial, a white man having been present, the facts as alone stated were proved. But the jury and the judges, as well as the murderer,

were slave drivers, the law was without difficulty evaded, and the murderer walks abroad without stain, glorying in the freedom of his country.

A gentleman of Connecticut, whom I met with lately, was travelling down the Ohio, and fell in with a drove of slaves going to the New Orleans market. Among the crowd were a father, mother, and daughter, ardently united by the tenderest ties of nature; they were indulged with the sweet hope that they should not be sold separately; the girl was beautiful, and appeared to be about eighteen; they reached the head of Louisville Falls and halted: a public-house keeper took a fancy to the girl—paid a large price, and she was his. You may imagine, if you can, the affectionate party, and their anguish at this moment; but what is the anguish of slaves to slave-owners. About to be torn asunder, the mother and daughter rushed into each other's arms, and grasped one another with a death's drasp. The whip descended upon them in vain; they staggered in each other's blood; still their faithful hearts gave nerve to the embrace, till at length nature yielded, and, swooning, they fell; they were then torn asunder to live a living death. But is there not a God who hears, and despises not the cry of the oppressed.

Blood-hounds are trained in the southern States to hunt and capture runaways. In Georgia, I am informed, there is scarcely an estate unsupplied with them.

The liberty of discussing the subject of slavery is no longer prostrate in the New World. The constitution of the United States is vindicated; and free and fair inquiry, worthy of a great and growing nation, is again abroad in its energy, beneath the ægis of law. In the United States, as well as every where else, mobs in general do not arise from the people, but from influential and factious individuals, who avail themselves of the ignorance, credulity, and prejudices of the people to impel them to disorder and violence. The tocsin of these demagogues in this country is "Amalgamation;" that is, any impartial and friendly intercourse, of a virtuous description, with the black or coloured people. Provided it be proud and impure enough, there is no difficulty. Incest, fornication, and adultery—holding them as slaves, or keeping them as servants, if, at the same time, a dignified distance is preserved—by the imperial white is excused or approved of; but to partake with them of the sacred emblems of a dying Saviour—to sit with them promiscuously in the public worship of God—to eat or drink or walk with them, or to admit them to any schools of a higher grade

in common with the aristocratic shade, is abomination to our moon-coloured race.

This deep and settled prejudice is most intense, even in the free States. Of this, Lane Seminary furnishes a striking and melancholy illustration. Lane Seminary is a Presbyterian Theological Institution near Cincinnati, having at its head two of the noblest minds of the country. It lately stood transcendent in character, a glory in the land: it is now a scathed and drivelling thing, crouching at the feet of "Amalgamation," or rather of the public sentiment against all holy and impartial intercourse with coloured people. The reason of its fall is explained in its Report of 1834 to be "the doctrine being advocated in it of social intercourse, according to character, irrespective of colour." A majority of the students had formed themselves into an Anti-slavery Society. One student, it was discovered, had accepted for a night the hospitality of a coloured family; and in another family of colour, a person connected with the Institution had actually boarded; and, as an unpardonable aggravation of this person's offence, he was seen walking near the seminary arm in arm with a coloured female. Great excitement was caused by a visit to the seminary of a number of persons of colour in a carriage, and the marked attention of the students to them. Let me quote, however, accurately from the Report. "During the vacation, and in the absence of a majority of the Faculty, events occurred which brought upon the Executive Committee the necessity, in their judgment, of immediate action. The urgency of this necessity was greatly increased during their attention to the subject by another visit to the seminary of a carriage of coloured persons, this augmented greatly the public exasperation," &c. &c. These attentions of the students to persons of colour went out over the city and over the country, and rendered the Institution an object of intolerable odium and indignation. Observe, now, that throughout the whole of these tremendous doings, colour was the only difficulty, and that nothing would have been more honourable, virtuous, or decorous had the colour been but pale enough. In this position it was supposed the Institution could not stand. The trustees, therefore, proceeded to immediate action, stung to madness by the intolerable fact, that four or five coloured people in a carriage had paid a visit to the Institution during vacation, and were politely escorted through the edifice by a student who happened to be present. They accordingly framed and promulgated a set of orders worthy only of tyrants themselves. The slaves of public pre-

judice to enact, and of servile spirits to obey. The heads of the seminary not only submitted to these, but while they cowered beneath the usurpation, they endeavoured to explain away its force; but the young men—a noble band, worthy of their country in its highest glory—stood firm, and when no alternative was left them but base submission, or a withdrawal from the seminary, they withdrew, and with them departed the glory of the Institution. The talents and learning of its heads may preserve to it an eternal brilliancy; new students may fill up its classes, and money may perhaps be poured into its coffers, but its glory is gone, its heart is extinguished, unless it repent and do its first works, it must remain a drivilling parasite, righteous so far as an insane and atrocious state of public sentiment will permit it, and no farther; yonder it lies prostrate; the Juggernaut of the United States—the aristocracy of colour is rolling proudly over it.

The colour-phobia or colour-mania is the palladium of slavery in the United States. It paralyzes or perverts the soul of the free States in which resides the might of the nation. This was the real secret of the Colonization Society, which flourished for a time, spreading its shade over the whole land. Religion was cramped, and truth and liberty lay bleeding beneath it. But the Colonization Society has been smitten—it is tottering to its fall. Religion is throwing off the spell, truth is beginning to lay hold on the public heart, and love and liberty are again, in beauty and majesty, walking abroad. In Massachusets a new seminary has been formed, irrespective of colour, and in the State of New-York, the spell of prejudice is palpably and extensively losing its soul-degrading power.

The agricultural population, I may safely say, is generally an anti-slavery population—that is, they are of the character which only needs correct information to bring them out cordially in behalf of liberty. The great difficulty is with the towns and cities, especially with those which flourish along the great high roads. The reason is hastening to be rich, in the vortex of earthly enterprize, and connected through a thousand channels with the slave-holding interests.

Garret Smith and his lady, two noble minds rich in the world's wealth, but richer far in the wealth of eternity, have established on their own property a coloured seminary. There is a manual labour-school at Whiteborough, of the finest description, completely free from the colour-phobia.

Even in the cities of the United States, in the midst of pre-

vailing iniquity, there is a glorious good—a refreshment and a light to one's soul we never had, even up to the last struggle in England; such a host of thorough-hearted champions as we already have here. Oh! there is going up a voice of prayer from black and white alike, a strife of love, a wielding of those weapons only which, through God, are mighty to conquer. Love is its heart, truth is its instrument, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men, to all men, black and white, friends and foes, slaves and slave-masters, is its object. It is God's cause; it cannot fail.

STEREOTYPED CHRISTIANITY.

To the Editors of the Christian Freeman.

When a printer thinks that he can command a long and extensive sale of a book, and that there are no corrections to be made on it, he gets it stereotyped; that is, he gets the types all run closely together in a metal plate, so that small changes only can be made, and these with great difficulty.

There is no book in all the world that can so well afford to be stereotyped as the Bible. Its matter is the truth of God, and the language by which the Holy Ghost expressed this truth, can never change. The Bible came perfect from the hand of a perfect God. Systems of philosophy, and all human systems were imperfect at first, and they continue imperfect still; but Christianity can never be improved. *It* may be stereotyped; for, whatever changes may pass over this changing world, Christianity, in the proper sense of the term, is ever the same.

The Christianity, however, of which I now speak, is the Christianity of form and ceremony, on which unhappily too many place far more dependence than on the power: not the form and ceremony for which we have express precept and example in God's own word, but the form and ceremony which man has attached to the Christian system; and which we find varying very much in different ages and countries, even among those who are the genuine disciples of Christ.

This form and ceremony, I say, vary very much; yet still, in the minds of very many belonging to a particular denomination, and a particular age, they are completely stereotyped. Such Christians cannot imagine how these ever could have

been properly otherwise; they cannot bear the thought of a change upon them: as they received them, so they would transmit them unaltered, and in every point the same. Now I am not going to inquire whether the different parts of this stereotyped Christianity, to which I shall have occasion to refer, be right or wrong; that is not my present business; but merely to suggest to the worthy readers of the *Christian Freeman*, that they should always be furnished with a sounder argument for the propriety of any form or ceremony, than merely that it is customary. To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. A minister told me, a few days since, that when he proposed, in rebuilding his meeting-house, to remove his pulpit from the middle of the side wall to the gable, a number of his congregation told him that they would leave his ministry. In vain he remonstrated with them, and told them that he wished to see the faces of the people, and the people to see him; that he wished to preach to the faces of the people, and not to their backs; that he wished to have the people before him, and not beside him and behind him; that he preached out of his mouth, and not out of his ears; that voice travels much farther straight forward than it does backward or round corners;—all this and far more availed nothing;—the pulpit was stereotyped on the side wall; it had been there, and it should be there, and far better sermons had been preached from the side wall than ever would be preached from the gable, and the side wall had done well enough the godly pious man that was there before him, and why should it not do him; and as to these new-fangled alterations, there was no end to them, and if the pulpit was put up against the gable now, there was no knowing but it might soon be put on the top of it; and, to make a long story short, if ever he preached a single sermon from the gable, it would be the last he should preach to them—they would go elsewhere, and hear good old light preaching from the side wall. Now, as I said before, it is not my business to decide which of the parties in this or any other case was right; but merely to set people a thinking on such matters in a solid scriptural way, without prejudice and without passion, remembering, on the one hand, that novelties are not improvements merely because they are new; nor yet are they to be condemned, merely because they are new, for all the good things in the world were novelties once.

There are again twelve stereotyped tunes, called David's

tunes, which it is said king David composed, and which alone should be sung in worship; and the introduction of any others has blown up fierce fires in many congregations. In one, for example, so soon as an unstereotyped tune was raised, a number of the people snatched up their hats, and were off, one of them exclaiming, "It is time for us to be out when the Devil is in;" in another, the clerk having resigned because an elder had threatened, before the assembled congregation, to collar him like a dog; when on the next Sabbath there was a long dead silence on the giving out of the line, another elder rose, and said very sarcastically, "I think we had better never mind praising God for a while, till we agree about how we are to do it;" while in many other congregations. one party with an old stereotyped tune strove, by dint of loud shouting, to sing down the new fangled party with their unstereotyped tune. One venerable man told me, a short time since, that he sung down the whole congregation of ——; and on my looking into his face somewhat incredulously, as he supposed, he assured me solemnly that he did, and could do it again.

Now, here again I must remind my readers, that I am a plain, illiterate man, not able to discuss whether or not the Devil should have all the good tunes—so illiterate as not even to know the names of the twelve tunes which David is said to have composed; and I hope it will be received as some apology for my ignorance, that in the congregation where I was bred not more than the one-third of them were sung; and so ignorant were the rest of the congregation, as well as myself, that I am sure if any of the remaining two-thirds had been sung, the clerk would have needed to take care of himself for singing new-fangled lilts. The first thing, therefore, *Mister Editor*, which should be done is, to see that all David's twelve tunes be sung, and well sung; and if the stereotyped people in any congregation object to any tune, they should, I humbly think, first prove that it is not one of David's twelve tunes; and if they do not know David's twelve, then they should give no opposition, but sing cheerfully and as well as ever they can, till they are sure that more than twelve tunes are sung. Here, then, is a way of preventing all dispute about music in congregations. If the people all know the names of king David's twelve tunes, and are perfectly sure from the Bible that they are really his; then let every man, woman, and child learn to sing these well; and till every one sing that can sing, and every one that cannot sing be taught to sing, let there not be a single jarring word about music, new or old; but where the

congregation, or the stereotypes of the congregation, cannot tell what are David's tunes, then let the clerk sing twelve tunes, good and appropriate tunes, such as in his conscience he believes David should not be ashamed to own; and let him teach these to the young and old, and all, taking special care never to introduce a tune till he has taught a large body of the congregation to sing it well; for certainly the clerk deserves to be collared like a dog who, for the purpose of displaying his own powers and his own vanity, would thrust in upon a congregation tune after tune, before having prepared a large body of the young, at least, to accompany him, and familiarized them to the ears and the hearts of the old, by having often heard them in the sweet voices of their own dear children.

Episcopalians, Independents, and Presbyterians often say of one another, that they are stiff and starched even in the order of their public forms of worship. I say again, as I have said often before, that it is none of my business to decide whether the Independents, the Episcopalians, or the Presbyterians be more stiffly starched. What I want, simply is, to get people to think about the reasons for its being wrong, and ever to vary the order merely of these stereotyped forms. For example, a minister finds that many of his people consider the explanation of the psalm merely a sort of introduction to the real solid services of the day, and on that account, never make their appearance till near its conclusion. Should he therefore be condemned for commencing the service with the sermon, on which they seem to lay the greatest stress; thus surprising the sluggards, who find, to their confusion, what they esteem almost the whole service over before their arrival? The sluggards certainly should be keen for having the order of the services stereotyped; and so should the sleepers, for they would be obliged to keep awake and watch, for fear of a surprise under any considerable variation.

It should make good men cautious how they stereotype merely human forms and ceremonies, when they reflect, that forms and ceremonies of the very opposite character, were left in stereotype by some of the very best of their forefathers. On many of the mere externals—the human dress of religion, there have been frequent and great changes. The very dress of the minister himself in its different departments, has been often in stereotype. In some times and places, ministers had, and they still have, a regular uniform, as fixed as a soldier's. They used to wear, for example, a cocked hat and bands; without cocked hat and bands, no one could pretend to be a

minister. A wig, too, they must have, or people would not listen to them had they preached like Paul. No matter how thick or how graceful their hair, they must cut it off and wear a wig, else they had no pretensions to be preachers. But the head dress was not alone in stereotype; all must be canonical; hence breeches buckled at the knee, and breeches only were tolerated. On one occasion a young minister was appointed to preach for a venerable father, but the old minister would not let him because he was dressed in pantaloons. "My people, said he, would be disgusted with you, and still worse with me, because I had let a fop in pantaloons into my pulpit." What was to be done? Fortunately, the young man's pantaloons had not been stereotyped, so he exchanged them for a pair of the old patriarch's small clothes, and though they were much too short for him, yet it was better by far than a minister preaching in pantaloons.

Now, though I have said it too often already, yet as I am very anxious not to be misunderstood, I must repeat that it is not any business of mine to decide whether the Gospel could be preached better from under a wig or a man's natural hair; or whether a man in breeches or in pantaloons is, upon the whole, the better minister. These, as I said, are things too high for me; I merely want people to consider, that it is, at least, troublesome and vexatious to stereotype things on which fashion makes such havoc; and it must necessarily cost a man of the old school much vexation and annoyance who contends for the divine right of wigs, knee breeches, and long stockings, to see the havoc made upon them by degenerate innovators. To set one's heart upon such things, as if religion consisted in them, is to store up for himself vexation and sorrow in old age, when changing fashion and custom have stolen away his idols, and he cries bitterly after them, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more; and what is this that ye say unto me, what aileth thee?"

The fashionable and learned look down on their simple neighbours with contempt, because they have so much in stereotype. They will permit, however, I hope, a plain ignorant man to hint, that in this respect he does not see very much difference between them and those whom they despise. The old stereotypes fight for the old music alone, the new stereotypes fight just as bitterly for the new; the new stereotypes are as much shocked at a minister entering the pulpit without a gown as if he entered naked; the old stereotypes would pull the gown off his back, and perhaps the coat too; and both of

them would be horrified if the coat of the minister was not as black as a crow. Superstition and prejudice are not with the ignorant and vulgar alone.

Leaving, however, all these differences of sentiment and feelings about man's religious forms, and dress, and ceremony, let it be my object, and that of every writer in the *Christian Freeman*, to bring all to see eye to eye in the great things that concern their everlasting peace. It is to be deplored, that so many, who so highly prize the shell, throw away the kernel; and too many, alas! who, tithe mint, anise, and cummin, neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. When shall men consent to prefer the things of Jesus Christ to their own; Oh! when shall they be willing to be nothing that Christ may be all in all. Of man's stereotyped Christianity we have enough—enough to the full; but of that which God has stereotyped, alas! how very little! How many Christians seem to forget that the moral law was written in STONE by the finger of God; and that not one jot or tittle of it shall pass, till all be fulfilled. How many Christians—drooping, desponding Christians—seem never to have learned that God's promises are all graven with a pen of iron, and lead in the rock for ever; and will the faint-hearted doubting Church never learn that God has said, "I have graven thee on the palms of my hands, thy walls are ever before me." Let us all, therefore, feel and act as having fast hold on eternal truth; and prove to the world by our patience under suffering, our meekness under persecution, our steadfastness under temptation, our perseverance in life and our triumph in death, that while falsehood, however specious, is only traced in sand, or painted on air, the truth on which our faith and hope are fixed, is established in the very heavens.

I am, &c.

ALPHA BETA.

A TIME TO WEEP.

THIS is our destiny as we are men but more as we are Christians, to sow in tears; and God loves these wet seed-times. They are seasonable for us here below. Those men, therefore, are mistaken that think to go to heaven with dry eyes, and hope to leap immediately out of the pleasures of earth into the paradise of God, insulting over the drooping estate of God's distressed ones. As Jeromy and Bede say of

PETER, that he could not weep while he was in the High-priest's walls; so these men cannot weep where they have offended. But let them know that they must have a time of tears; and if they do not begin with tears they shall end with them. Wo be to them that laugh, for they shall weep; and if they will not weep here, they shall weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth hereafter. Here must be tears, and that good store.

While we stay here, God keeps all our tears in a bottle, so precious is the water that is distilled from penitent eyes; and because he will be sure not to fail, he notes how many drops there be in his register. It was a precious ointment, wherewith the woman in the Pharisee's house (it is thought Mary Magdalen), anointed the feet of CHRIST: but her tears wherewith she washed them, were more worth than her spikenard. But that which is here precious, is there unseasonable; then he shall wipe away those which here he would save. As death, so passions are the companions of infirmity; whereupon some that have been too nice have called those which were incident to CHRIST, propassions; not considering that he which was capable of death, might be as well of passions. These troublesome affections of grief, fear, and such like, do not fall into glorified souls. It is true, that they have love, desire, joy in their greatest perfection; yea, they could not have perfection without them; but like as GOD loves and hates, and rejoices truly, but in a manner of his own, abstracted from all infirmity and passion. So do his glorified saints in imitation of him. There, therefore, as we cannot die, so we cannot grieve, we cannot be afflicted. Here one says, my belly, my belly, with the prophet; another, mine head, mine head, with the Shunamite's son; another, my son, my son, as David; another, my Father, my Father, as Elisha. One cries out of his sins, with David; another of his hunger, with Esau; another of an ill wife, with Job; another of treacherous friends, with the Psalmist; one of a sore in body, with Hezekiah; another of a troubled soul, with our SAVIOUR in the Garden; every one hath some complaint or other, to make his cheek wet, and his heart heavy. Stay but awhile, and there shall be none of these; there shall be no crying, no complaining in the streets of the New Jerusalem; no axe, no hammer shall be heard within this heavenly temple. Why are we not content to weep here awhile, on condition that we may weep no more? Why are we not ambitious of this blessed case? Certainly we do not smart enough with our evils, that we are

not desirous of rest. These tears are not yet dry, yet they are ready to be overtaken by others, for our particular afflictions. Miseries, as the Psalmist compares them, are like waves, which break one upon another, and toss us with a perpetual vexation; and we, vain men, shall we not wish to be in heaven? Are we sick, and grieve to think of remedies? Are we still dying, and are we loath to think of life? Oh, this miserable unbelief, that though we see a glorious heaven above us, yet we are unwilling to go to it; we see a wearisome world about us, and yet are loath to think of leaving it.—*Bishop Hall.*

IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

By the late Dr. James Gray, Philadelphia.

The priestly atonement of Messiah was, in all ages, and under every dispensation the very same thing, which it was in Paul's day, and is at this hour, the basis of a saint's faith—the concentrated essence of religion. Look from Abel to Melchisedec, and from Melchisedec to Aaron, and you scarcely find one single instance of a worshipper of the true God, but it is at the altar, and shedding the blood of atonement. But when you have arrived at that prodigious combination of civil and religious polity, which God formed at Sinai for his beloved nation, there you find the animal creation with their veins sluiced, and the fire burning night and day on God's altar, sending up to heaven the incessant volume of sacrificial smoke; while a whole family, increasing with the population of the community, serve at that altar; and one tribe out of twelve are consecrated to the various services of the priesthood.

And why all this! Strip sacrifice of typical reference, make it an ultimate duty of religion, and then let the wit of man say one rational thing in its favour. Is it that the father of mercies delights in the agonies and groans of his expiring creatures, and feasts only on blood! Was it out of lenity that he levied so burdensome a tax on his beloved people, and then burnt it to ashes! Where was the policy worthy of Moses, to mention no higher name, in subtracting from the national wealth and industry the labour of so many hands! And why, of all things, should the whole nation be called from their homes and occupations, three times in the year, to behold their flocks and herds reduced to smoke and ashes! But make the

ordinance emblematical, let these priests and their bleeding victims, represent Jehovah's high priest, expiating the sins of his people by his blood, and obtaining access for them into the presence of the Father of mercies, and all becomes glorious, worthy of God, and consolatory to men. Jehovah, offended at sin, is exhibited as appeased by the sacrifice of his Son; and sinners, placing faith in the blood and intercession of their high priest, "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

But leaving the law, the Gospel system is to be looked to as the consummation of religion in every respect; and whatever darkness may have prevailed in the antecedent dispensations, we are entitled to expect that a dispensation introduced by the personal ministry of the Son of God, and completed by his apostles under a full unction of the Holy Ghost, will dispel it all, and leave the doctrine of human salvation as luminous as it ought to be, or indeed can be. And if redemption by the blood of atonement be indeed the doctrine of salvation, it will not be thrown behind a veil, nor sketched in the back ground of the painting, diminished and obscure; but will stand forth the prominent figure, to strike every eye, and enrapture every heart. This is exactly what has taken place. When John, the Baptist, pointed out the Messiah to his disciples, it was thus, "Behold the *Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*" When our Lord spoke of redeeming his people, his *life* was the price which he proposed to pay for them. And it is apparent to the most cursory reader of the apostolic writings, that redemption by the blood of Jesus was the burden of their preaching. And be it noted, that this doctrine was far from being popular in that age. It was then as obnoxious to the scoffs and scorn of various classes of men, as ever it has been since; and nothing but its truth, and fundamental importance, can acquit the apostles from the charge of folly in burdening their moral system with so repulsive a doctrine. To the Jews it was a *stumbling-block*, to the Greeks it was *foolishness;* yet these men determined to know nothing among either of them save "Christ crucified." And to say no more, the priesthood of Jesus, and its sole efficacy in bringing salvation to sinful men, is the theme of this epistle (Hebrews), a theme professedly stated for accurate discussion. And surely there is not, in all the book of God, another subject more copiously or solemnly argued. The consecration of Jesus to the priesthood, the sacrifice which he offered, his intercession founded on that sacrifice; the efficacy of that sacri-

fice in purging sin, in purifying the conscience, in obtaining reconciliation, in destroying him that hath the power of death, in conducting many sons to glory; and the dreadful consequences of treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing—In what terms are they not portrayed!

Ard, indeed, if Christ's atonement, with its associated doctrine, the application of his blood to the conscience by the Holy Spirit, be denied; all the religion that ever God revealed to sinful men is swept clean away. All the sacrificial blood shed by the Patriarchs is nothing; the Jewish priests with their torrents of sacrificial blood are nothing; the doctrine of salvation by the blood of Jesus, taught by himself, and by all his apostles is nothing; and this epistle certainly worse than nothing; because, after a prodigious parade of zeal and argument, it proves just nothing at all. The river which watered the Paradise of the church, is dried up in all its streams; the flowers wither, and the trees shed their immature fruit. Say not we have still left us the doctrine of the resurrection! It is not an escape from the grave, but admission into the presence of a reconciled God, that we want. Say not, that even after the doctrine af atonement is set aside, we have excellent rules of morality! What avails it, with regard to our eternal condition, since by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified in the sight of God. And even in regard to the present life, what injury must our morality suffer, by being cut off from approaching the throne of grace, "that we may obtain mercy, and grace to help in the time of need." After we shall have renounced the doctrine of redemption by the blood of Jesus, is there no danger that our morality will degenerate into the fretting metaphysics of moral speculation; questions about *utility*, and *sympathy*, and *selfishness*, and *benevolence*, and all that endless subtilty. But even admitting that practical morality should, as in many instances it certainly does, exist withour faith in the Redeemer's blood. It will merit inquiry how much of that morality is the legacy of parents, whose consciences were purged by that precious blood; how much of it is the mere habit of the age; how much of it the prudence of the man who, from one cause or another, finds it a point of worldly prudence to maintain a virtuous carriage. It may not be useless to trace this morality in another direction; and to ask how much of it springs from the love and fear of God, by what hopes it is cheered, by what motives it is prompted; for even they who possess it can hardly say

with the apostle, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead; and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again." But inquiries of the sort alluded to each man must make for himself. It is not for us to usurp the province of judging the motives of any man's virtuous conduct. Besides, indeed, we have better evidence of the connexion between the doctrine of atonement and practical righteousness, than could result from the analysis of apparent virtues, were that analysis much more practicable than, happily for mankind, it is found to be; broad evidence, collected from the whole surface of the moral world. In what nation did practical virtue ever distinguish the general character, till the doctrine of Jesus's atonement went before and sowed the seeds? From what country has this doctrine taken its flight, without carrying with it the purity and dignity of Christian morals; while, immediately on its departure, the abominations of heathen depravity have sprung up like indigenous briars and thorns, weeds and poisons; presenting to the eye, the horrible prospect of a land from which God has withdrawn his blessing, and left the original curse to its uncontrolled operation? Cast your eyes over Christendom, and point with your finger to any church you please. I ask, what was the golden age of that church? Was it not the age, when the atonement of Jesus stood prominent in her creed, was proclaimed from her pulpits, was lisped by her babes, and dropped like honey from the lips of all her members? What was her silver age? Was it not that, in which this doctrine, not yet forgotten, fell into disuse and neglect; and preachers instead of endeavouring to raise the practical virtues from faith in the Saviour's blood, like clusters from the vine; began to demoralise the age by the abstractions and prettinesses of moral declamation. Pursuing the allusion, you have the brazen age, when doubt and denial of this doctrine became fashionable and common. And its general rejection gives the age of *iron*.

> ——Hard steel succeeded then;
> And stubborn as the metal were the men.
> Truth, modesty, and shame, the world forsook;
> Fraud, avarice, and force, their places took.

Would you reform that age, bring back the atonement. You never can have a Wickliffe, a Luther, a Calvin, or a Knox, without it. One thing in respect to this doctrine is really

strange, that while we are told by the wise men of this world that it is mystical, and absurd, and even that it is not found in the scriptures, rude and untutored minds, without reading any other books than the scriptures, have drunk it in, in all ages and countries: and with it, have also drunk in the principles of the most ardent piety, pure morality, and mental cultivation.

PERSECUTION OF THE NATIVE CHRISTIANS IN MADAGASCAR.

THE mission in Madagascar, lately bright with promise, has undergone a melancholy reverse. The Queen and the Government had received reports, from different parts of the country, of the decline of respect for the objects of idolatry, and the freedom with which the people dared to speak of the light esteem in which they held the charms, amulets, and other symbols of superstitious power; together with the multitudes that were seeking after a knowledge of the true God, and the extent to which the meetings for prayer prevailed. These reports excited the alarm and anger of the Queen. All amusements, music, dancing, &c., ceased at court for nearly a fortnight, as if some calamity had befallen the nation. After the first paroxysms of anger had subsided, and the suspense and silence that followed had passed, means of a most decisive character were taken to stay the progress of change. The Queen issued her solemn edict against Christianity, forbidding, under the most fearful penalties, all measures for its promotion, and proclaimed her determination to revive to the utmost the ancient and established superstitions of the country.

On the 1st of March, a national assembly was held, at which the Sovereign proclaimed, with all the means of intimidation the Government could command, her determination to suppress Christianity. The whole population, from an immense distance round the capital, male and female, old and young, civil and military, was collected on the occasion. The day was ushered in by the firing of cannon, to strike terror into the hearts of the people. The message was announced and enforced by the judges and chief military officers. The Queen sent to express her indignation that any of her people had dared to depart from ancient and established usages—to despise the idols—to neglect divinations—to pray in new and unheard-of names (Jehovah and Jesus)—to observe the Sabbath—imitate the custom of Europeans in those things—using forms of expression about faith, obedience, &c.—assembling for prayer-meetings in private houses—changing the mode of swearing—and *allowing their slaves to learn to read*. Every thing of the kind was then authoritatively forbidden, together with whatever had a tendency to change established usages in religion. One month was given to the people to come forward and accuse themselves of whatever they had done in connexion with all these things, particularly all who had been baptized—all who had attended evening prayer-meetings—all who had learned to read, or attended public worship. All in possession of honours, civil or military, who had done more than simply learn to read—all who had

attended places of worship, especially private prayer-meetings, were degraded in rank. The mass of the people who had become implicated, to pay a fine according to their districts: the most diligent to lose more than half their rank; and the senior teachers the same. The punishment may, in some sense, be considered moderate;—no life is taken away: and this may be accounted for by the fact that the law, now implicating so many, is an *ex post facto* law, and could not well be made severe. A further reason may be, that great numbers of all classes were involved, including many of the principal families in the country. The only thing allowed was, teaching the children in the schools numeration on the slate. The name of Jesus must not be invoked. The very recollection of the instructions given by the missionaries is forbidden;—all this under pain of death to the offender, confiscation of property, and slavery to the wife and children. The missionaries, as foreigners, are allowed to practise their own forms of worship.

Under trials so unexpected and severe, the native Christians exhibited the utmost firmness of principle; and, though strongly urged by admonitions and threats to renounce God, and worship idols, they stood firm, and unhesitatingly declared that their minds were made up: they would pray to none but God, and they would suffer death rather than render to idols the homage due to him.

The above is from the *Missionary Chronicle* for October: the *Chronicle* for December states that no favourable change has occurred. The declarations of the Government have been confirmed by their subsequent proceedings, and leave no hope from that quarter. The law still remains in force: and though death has not yet been inflicted on the native Christians, it is sternly and repeatedly threatened. It must not be concluded, because none suffer martyrdom, either that Christianity is renounced by those who professed it, or that those by whom it is prohibited are too merciful to execute their own laws. Whatever causes restrain the Government, the Christians are in jeopardy every hour. The mission, however, has been so far successful, as to secure a foundation for the establishment of Christianity in the island.

There is now no preaching but in English at the house of the missionaries. No tracts can be distributed. The schools are in danger of being broken up, or placed under the control of military officers. The authorities profess their willingness to have a reading-book printed and taught, containing native proverbs, but nothing religious. Since the edict against Christianity, the missionaries have gone on with the printing of the Scriptures, and by this time they have finished printing, in the language of Madagascar, the whole Word of God.

Let the persecuted mission in Madagascar be borne on the hearts of Christians, in intercession at the throne of grace. "Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause!"

THE CONVERTS IN THE SOCIETY ISLANDS.

Extract from a Speech by Rev. John Williams.

We were visited, a few years ago, by one of his Britannic Majesty's

vessels, commanded by a gentleman who is connected with a noble family. The vessel happened to arrive at the time of our annual missionary meeting, in the month of May; and the officers and others of the crew attended our mission service. After the sermon in the morning, the public meeting took place. A native president took the chair: several native speakers addressed the meeting with peculiar effect, and the speeches were interpreted to the gentlemen who favoured us with their presence. Some of them, however, said that the natives were mere parrots, and only repeated what the missionaries had taught them; others said that this was impossible; at length the chaplain, and some of the officers, came to me, and said, "We have had a warm dispute, and you must give the casting vote; for some of us say that the natives are mere parrots, and can give no reason for what they say or do." I said, "Gentlemen, you will excuse my giving any opinion upon the subject; but if you will visit me this afternoon, I will collect ten or twelve natives, and you shall ask them any questions on any subject which you choose, and I will simply act as an interpreter." The natives met, to the number of fifteen; I did not give them to understand the purpose for which they were assembled; I only said, "These gentlemen have some questions to ask you."

The question was then asked—"Do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God?" They were startled: they had never entertained a single doubt on the subject; but, after a moment's pause, one answered, "Most certainly we do: undoubtedly we do." It was asked, "Why do you believe it? Can you give any reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God?" He replied, "Why, look at the power with which it has been attended, in the utter overthrow of all that we have been addicted to from time immemorial. What else could have demolished that system of idolatry which had so long prevailed among us? No human arguments could have induced us to abandon that false system."

The same question being put to another, he replied, "I believe the Bible to be the Word of God, on account of the pure system of religion which it contains. We had a system of religion before; but look how dark and black a system that was, compared with the bright system of salvation revealed in the Word of God! Here we learn that we are sinners, and that God gave Jesus Christ to die for us; and, by that goodness, salvation is given to us. Now, what but the wisdom of God could have produced such a system as this presented to us in the Word of God? And this doctrine leads to purity."

There was a third reply to this question, and it was rather a singular one; but it was a native idea—"When I look at myself, I find I have got hinges all over my body. I have hinges on my legs—hinges to my jaws—hinges to my feet. If I want to take hold of any thing, there are hinges to my hands to do it with. If my heart thinks, and I want to speak, I have got hinges to my jaws. If I want to walk, I have hinges to my feet. Now here," continued he, "is wisdom, in adapting my body to the various functions which it has to discharge. And I find that the wisdom, which made the Bible, exactly fits with this wisdom, which has made the body; consequently I believe the Bible to be the Word of God."

Another replied, "I believe it to be the Word of God, on account of the prophecies which it contains, and the fulfilment of them." [The Rev. Gentleman here related several proofs, which were pro-

duced by the islanders, from the gospel history, of the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies.]

After this they came to the doctrines of the Gospel; among others, to the doctrine of the resurrection: and the question was asked—"Do you believe in it?" They replied, "Yes, most certainly." "In what body shall we rise?" They answered—"In a chapter in the Corinthians, it is said, It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." The Captain would not be satisfied: he required to know the identical nature of the body which shall be raised. The natives hesitated some time; and, at last, one said, "I have it! We shall see him as he is; and shall be like him." The Captain said again, "I want to know the precise body with which we shall be raised." This occasioned a considerable consultation among them: at length one said, "It cannot be like the body of Christ, when it hung on the cross: it will be like his glorious body, when he was transfigured on the Mount." I give these as specimens of the answers which they gave: and I can assure you, that I did nothing more than simply act as an interpreter between the parties.

THE WATERS OF LIFE.

THE following beautiful little effusion from the pen, or rather we should say, from the heart of the poet, James Montgomery, was handed to us in his own *manuscript*. We confess we felt deep interest in perusing the hand-writing of an author so eminent—and one who has consecrated so much of his poetic power to the service of religion. Our readers will peruse the poem with delight, and this feeling will not, at all events, be lessened by the circumstance to which we have alluded:—

"From thence (Arnon in the wilderness) they went to Beer; that is, the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses,—Gather the people together and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song—'Spring up, O well! sing ye unto it.' The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the Lawgiver, with their staves." Numbers xxi. 16—18.

Spring up, O well! sweet fountain! spring,
And fructify the desert sand;
Sing, ye that drink the waters, sing,
They dance along the smiling land,
With flowers adorn, with verdure dress,
The waste and howling wilderness.

Ho! every one that thirsts, draw nigh—
Fainting with sickness, worn with toil;
Let him that hath no money buy,
Buy milk and honey, wine and oil:

Those fourfold streams of Paradise,
Priceless, because above all price.

Come to the pool, ye lame and blind!
Ye lepers! to this Jordan come;
Sight, strength, and healing each may find,
Approach the waves, ye deaf and dumb!
Their joyful sound ye soon shall hear,
And your own voice salute your ear.

In every form the waters run,
Rill, river, torrent, lake and sea—
Through every clime beneath the sun—
Free as the air, as day light free;
Till earth's whole face the floods o'ersweep,
As oceans tides the channell'd deep.

As moved, with mighty wings outspread,
God's Spirit o'er the formless void;
So be that Spirit's influence shed,
To new create a world destroyed:
Till all that died by Adam's fall,
Revive in Christ who died for all.

Sheffield, July 23d, 1835. J. MONTGOMERY.

INTEGRITY.

THE borough of Hull, in the reign of Charles II., chose Andrew Marvell, a young gentleman of little or no fortune, and maintained him in London for the service of the public. His understanding, integrity, and spirit, were dreadful to the then infamous administration. Persuaded that he would be theirs for properly asking, they sent his old school-fellow, the lord treasurer, Danby, to renew acquaintance with him in his garret. At parting, the lord treasurer, out of *pure affection*, slipped into his hands an order upon the treasury for £1000, and then went into his chariot. Marvell looking at the paper, called after the treasurer—"My lord, I request another moment." They went up again to the garret, and Jack the servant boy was called, "Jack, child, what had I for dinner yesterday?" "Don't you remember, Sir, you had the little shoulder of mutton that you ordered me to bring from a woman in the market." "Very right, child. What have I for dinner to-day?" "Don't you know, Sir, that you bade me lay up the *blade bone to broil*?" "'Tis so: very

right, child, go away." "My lord, do you hear that? Andrew Marvell's dinner is provided; there's your piece of paper: I want it not. I knew the sort of kindness you intended. I live here to serve my constituents; the ministry may seek men for their purpose; *I am not one.*"

No Roman virtue ever surpassed this; and with Dr. Johnson we repeat, "No man, whose appetites are his masters, can perform the duties of his nature with strictness and regularity. He that would be superior to external influences, must first become superior to his own passions. When the Roman general, sitting at supper with a plate of turnips before him, was solicited, by a large promise, to betray his trust; he asked the messengers whether he, that could sup on turnips, was a man likely to sell his country? Upon him who has reduced his senses to obedience, temptation has lost its power: he is able to attend impartially to virtue, and execute her commands without hesitation.

Sir Richard Steele exhibits a melancholy contrast to Marvell. Being once reproached by a Mr. Whiston, for having, in the House of Commons, given some votes contrary to his formerly professed opinions; his answer was, "Mr. Whiston, you can walk on foot; I cannot." Rather than abandon the luxury of a coach, he could abandon his most cherished principles, and subject himself to the most odious of imputations.

BEDELL'S ANECDOTE OF FULGENTIO.

Bishop Bedell strenuously advocated the circulation of the Scriptures in the Irish language. Knowing what a powerful instrument of the Reformation the Bible had been in other parts of Europe, he translated the New Testament into Irish, and had it printed at his own expense. He used to relate, with much pleasure, a passage of a sermon that he heard Fulgentio preach at Venice. It was on the words of Christ, "Have ye not read?" He took occasion to tell his auditory, that if Christ were now to ask this question, "Have ye not read?" all the answer they could make to it, was, "No, for they were not suffered to do it." Upon which he taxed, with great zeal, the restraint put on the use of the Scriptures by the See of Rome. Fulgentio, on another occasion, preached from Pilate's question, "What is truth?" He told his audience, that at last, after many searches, he found it, and holding out a New Testament, he said, There it was in his hand. He then put it in his pocket, and said, coldly, "But the book is prohibited." This was so suited to the Italian humour, that it took mightily with his auditory.

THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

ALL admit this to be desirable, and wish that this, when dying, may be theirs. We do not hear men say, "Let me die the death of the *Philosopher!*" in whatever terms they express their admiration of his genius, his discoveries, or his fame. They do not say, "Let me die the death of the *Warrior!*" with whatever ardour they celebrate his battles and his bravery. They do not say, "Let me die the death of the *Orator* or *Statesman!*" whatever be the enthusiasm and the praise with which they celebrate his politics and his powers. No; their language is, "Let me die the death of the *Righteous*, and let my last end be like his!"

THE LATE REV. MR. LESLIE.

MR. LESLIE, our readers are aware, resigned his charge as minister of Kilraughts, in connexion with the Synod of Ulster, and went out as a missionary to Jamaica. In March last he sailed from Greenock, and three months after his arrival, he was numbered with the dead. His mother-in-law, Mrs. M'Kinstry, who accompanied him with his wife and child, died on the 31st of July last. That same day he received a letter from Ireland, informing him of the death of his father. On the 18th of August, he himself was called to go the way of all the earth. The immediate cause of his death is attributed to the unhealthiness of a swampy place on the sea coast, where he took up a temporary residence. He expired in the hope and peace of a Christian. He has fallen, but others, it is hoped, will come forward to occupy his post.

PRESBYTERIAN SECESSION CHURCH.

LARNE.—The meeting-house here was opened on the 15th November by the Rev. Professor Edgar, of the Royal Belfast College. After the discourse a collection was taken, amounting to £54. The gentlemen who officiated as collectors were Messrs. S. Darcus, A. Barklie, P. Magarell, H. Moon, T. Maxwell, and T. Redmond.

ISLAND MAGEE.—On the 22nd November, the Presbyterian Secession meeting-house in this place, was re-opened by the Rev. Professor Cairns, of the Royal Belfast College, and the Rev. John Rogers, Glascar. The collection amounted to £15. At the first opening of this meeting-house, by the Rev. Pofessor Edgar, a very large collection was obtained. Such things speak well both for Mr. Potter and his neighbours.

ERRATUM.

Page 98, line 20, instead of "wrong, *and* ever to vary," read, "wrong ever to vary."

Wilson, Printer, Belfast.